

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. CHRISTOPHER SHAYS**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 8, 2001*

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, on November 6, I was in Connecticut participating in our local elections and, therefore, missed three recorded votes.

I take my voting responsibility very seriously and would like the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to reflect that, had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on recorded vote No. 426, "yes" on recorded vote No. 427, and "yes" on recorded vote No. 428.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM G.  
AIKEN

**HON. SCOTT MCINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 8, 2001*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize William G. Aiken and his contribution to this country during World War II. Bill began his service in 1943 at the invasion of Salerno, Italy and fought courageously to defend freedom and this great country.

Mr. Aiken operated mortars in the 84th Mortar Battalion of the 5th Army. He was tasked with the assignment of providing artillery field support to the invading allied forces. As such, Aiken's unit was often in the lead of several invading beach assaults; including nine tenuous days on the beaches at Salerno where they clung to the beachhead as the Nazis tried to repel Aiken's squad and the rest of the American units. Mr. Aiken returned to Colorado after the war and retired in 1978. Among his decorations are the Purple Heart for wounds he received in combat and the Bronze Star for valor.

Mr. Speaker it is a great privilege to recognize William G. Aiken for his service to this country. He served selflessly in a time of great need, bringing credit to himself and this nation. If it were not for men like Bill, we would not enjoy the freedoms we so value today.

HONORING JUDGE STANLEY A.  
MILLER

**HON. THOMAS M. BARRETT**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 8, 2001*

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to the work of Judge Stanley Miller. Through his service in the Milwaukee Courts, our city was provided with not only a fair arbitrator, but also a mentor who was deeply committed to improving our community.

Judge Miller's leadership was evident from the very beginning of his career. While attending the University of Wisconsin Law School, Miller was elected the first African American president of the Student Bar Association.

He went on to serve our community for more than 20 years on the Milwaukee Munic-

ipal Court and Milwaukee County Circuit Court. Judge Miller knew that justice began with equal representation of the community on the bench, and for this reason, he encouraged many African American attorneys to become judges.

Judge Miller believed in our youth. He stressed the importance of preventing crime and worked tirelessly to keep kids out of the court system. From the bench, he urged professionals to be more vigilant of the needs of children, before serious problems arise.

Through his years of work in the courts and in our community, Judge Miller set a high standard for those who will follow him, and he will be deeply missed. I join the residents of Milwaukee in extending our condolences to his family, and honoring this great man.

NATIONAL MEDICAL EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS ACT OF 2001

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 8, 2001*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation, the "National Medical Emergency Preparedness Act of 2001" to create at least four new National Medical Preparedness Centers within the Department of Veterans Affairs. These centers would develop contemporary diagnostic and treatment programs, as well as teaching protocols to deal with the many possible chemical, biological and radiological threats that may confront our Nation at this dangerous time. I am joined by distinguished colleagues of the Veterans' Affairs Committee: LANE EVANS, our Ranking Member; MIKE BILIRAKIS, our Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health; STEVE BUYER, our Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations; and CLIFF STEARNS, our former Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health and Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection.

As we watch with deep concern the unfolding events and investigations regarding anthrax in Florida and New York, in my own Congressional district in Trenton, New Jersey, and now here in Congress, in the Brentwood Post Office and a number of other locations, I believe that it is imperative that Congress ensure our Nation better prepare itself for incidents of terrorism. We need timely, effective, and comprehensive responses to protect the health of the American people, and that is why my colleagues and I are introducing this bill. The new centers would be under the general umbrella of the Department of Veterans Affairs, but would have special—even unique—missions that encompass a much larger role in protecting Americans.

The bill calls for the establishment of at least four geographically dispersed locations. Each center would independently study and work toward solutions to problems emanating from exposure to dangerous chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. Although the VA would oversee these new centers, their work products should provide for the general welfare of the people. Mr. Speaker, we have learned a great deal in the last month about our health system's ability to recognize and re-

spond to a biological attack. It is clear to me and the cosponsors of this legislation that there needs to be a significant investment in teaching health professionals about the effects of chemical, biological and nuclear agents. While health care specialists in the Armed Forces have developed a substantial body of information, their mission does not extend to teaching and assisting community health care providers throughout the United States. Further, we have seen the limitations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in responding to outbreaks and attacks. The VA health care system is an important piece to addressing the problems we currently face.

Perhaps what is most important about the VA's capability is that it already exists in the 54 states and territories. The VA consists of 171 hospitals, 800 outpatient clinics and other facilities with their 182,000 employees including 14,000 physicians, and 60,000 nursing personnel of whom 37,000 are registered nurses. This represents a federally-appropriated resource with centralized command and control leadership that is the largest fully integrated health care system in the United States. In past disasters, the VA hospital has sometimes been the only operational medical facility in affected localities. This widely dispersed but integrated healthcare infrastructure makes the VA an essential national asset in responding to potential biological, chemical, or radiological attacks. VA's existing medical capability could be quickly expanded and enhanced with only modest investments.

The mission of these centers would be to conduct research and develop methods of detection, diagnosis, vaccination, protection and treatment for chemical, biological, and radiological threats to public safety, such as anthrax, smallpox, bubonic plague, radiation poison and other hazards to human health that we may not be able to fathom today. My bill would authorize these centers to engage in direct research, coordinate ongoing and new research and educational activity in other public and private agencies, including research universities, schools of medicine, and schools of public health. The centers would act as clearinghouses for new discoveries and serve to disseminate the latest and most comprehensive information to public and private hospitals in order to improve the quality of care for patients who are exposed to these deadly elements. The skills and knowledge they produce would also help to protect health care workers, emergency personnel, active duty military personnel, police officers, and hopefully, all our citizens.

Through its extensive medical and prosthetic research and clinical care programs, VA already has expertise in diagnosing and treating viral and bacterial illnesses associated with previous serious health problems, such as the hepatitis C epidemic, the HIV pandemic, and in earlier generations, the tuberculosis crisis. In the early part of this century, a number of VA hospitals were created specifically to combat tuberculosis, which had a high incidence in the veteran population. VA currently operates two War-Related Illness Centers tasked with developing specialized treatments for those illnesses and injuries that result from veterans' combat and wartime exposures. VA has successfully launched new centers with expertise in geriatrics and gerontology, mental illness and Parkinson's disease. These centers are superb examples of what experts can do when